

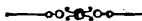
FOURTH SERIES.]

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RELIGION ITS OWN

BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN

BOSTON

OWN EVIDENCE.

BY

GE BACHELOR.



ARIAN ASSOCIATION,
STON.

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.” — ARTICLE I. *of the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*

RELIGION ITS OWN EVIDENCE.

As the substance, of which all religions are specific forms, religion may be considered without reference to the "Christian evidences." Being an independent manifestation of human nature going through certain peculiar experiences, it may be regarded as having a basis of its own, without reference to an "ethical basis" or a "scientific basis." These latter are the foundations of science and ethics, — two great classifications of observed human experience which cannot be confounded with religion or with one another, without confusion of thought.

What, then, is religion? It is a definite form of experience resulting from the necessary contact of human beings with the system of things of which they form a part. It is the object of this essay to show in part the nature of this experience, to note some of its successive phases, with the emotions excited, and their characteristic forms of expression.

1. **POWER.** The first experience of every child brings it into more or less conscious relations with energy in its various forms. When it would lift its tiny hand, an unseen power pulls it down again. When it essays to rise upon its tender feet, the power drags it back, and will not let it stand and walk until it has found within itself some capacity of resistance, in the force of its own will and the energy which comes under its own control. Continuing its contention with Power, it finds each day a larger

measure of energy at its disposal, together with greater flexibility and control of the organs through which it is exerted. It learns to walk, ride, climb, swim, work. (The Power forbids it to fly.) Every new experience reveals a new mode of the omnipresent energy. In the forest, on the shore of the ocean, — wherever air and water moved in wind and storm and pleasant breeze; in the earthquake and the volcano; in the changes of the seasons and all such phenomena of Nature greatly affecting his life, — man constantly and anxiously watched the exhibition of Power, and compared it with the strength given to himself; measured the little force which came within the limits of his personality with the power with which he had to do, and decided that the contest was too unequal. He was helpless in the grasp of Power upon which he was absolutely dependent.

In low forms of social development, — represented, for example, by Browning's Caliban, — the Power (whether called He or It) is regarded as something which can hurt or help; which indeed contains within its unknown potency all possible hurt or help which may come from benignant skies or baleful pestilence, from fruitful earth or demonic power ravaging the earth and destroying life and the means of life. Caliban

“Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength; no change,
If he have done his best, make no new world
To please him more, so leave off watching this, —
If he surprise not even the quiet self
Some strange day, — or suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow into butterflies; else, here are we,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.”

Caliban has a very vivid conception of power and of his dependence on it; and this sense, mean and bare though

it be, is the root of religion. This sense of dependence on power accompanies man as he rises through all the grades of developing life until he attains to the most sublime conceptions of his relations to Omnipotence. By some, it has been made the essence of all religion. It is an element in all religious experience, because man can never escape it; but it is a principal element only in the lower forms of nature worship and fetichism. When once it had shaped itself in the human mind as a source of emotion, religion began to be, and worship in its rudest form was instituted.

Summary. There has been made upon the sensitive nature of man an impression that we are dependent upon Power which we cannot live without, cannot escape, and cannot successfully resist. This impression has been continually made and constantly repeated in striking forms until it has become hereditary and instinctive. It is the first element in the religious consciousness of the race; and, without a doubt, it is universal.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear.

The characteristic is dependence.

2. MYSTERY. Not long after human beings begin to establish conscious relations with Power, there comes the perception of mystery.

What is mystery? It is that form of human knowledge in which the known reveals the existence and presence, but not the nature, of the unknown. If there be no knowledge, there can be no mystery. If there be perfect knowledge, there can be no mystery. The mysterious is that of which one knows something, enough to know that there is more out of sight which might be known if one had opportunity. It is said that mystery is the child of ignorance and the imagination. But whatever is wholly imaginary is no mystery. A real mystery begins in the known, — a

solid bridge of fact over which we advance to the knowledge of the unknown. Rightly comprehended, mystery is the mother of science. Wrongly taken, it is the prolific source of superstition. No man can know that any mystery is inscrutable. His half knowledge is a challenge to investigation, and an omen of success. Where knowledge cannot go, the imagination can; and, if any mystery should ever be regarded as beyond the reach of the intellect of man, that would speedily become the centre about which superstitions would begin to group themselves.

In the early days of human development, the imagination of man was powerfully stimulated by the presence of the unknown. His intellect was excited, and his emotions aroused in the attempt to find out what lay outside of and beyond that which he saw.

Everything that he learned to know quickly conducted him to something which he did not know. The force of gravity, the power of the sunshine, storms, sleep, dreams, birth, life, sorrow, joy, disease, death, — all such things in experience brought him into the presence of mystery which excited his intelligence and stimulated his curiosity, while it increased his hopes and his fears. He penetrated each mystery with ease, only to find it deepen at every step of his advance. His imagination began to fill the unknown with things fit to satisfy his hopes and account for his fears. He began to imagine beings capable of wielding and controlling the mighty forces which were at work around him. The darkness he peopled with the creatures of his dreams; and, beyond the void of death, his desire prompted him to build for himself a refuge. Religion began to be something more than a hope or a fear attaching itself to the Power in the grasp of which all life is held. The gloom and awe of the deepening mystery of life and that which includes life began to press upon the imagination. In India and in Egypt, in the most ancient

historic times, the eternal Presence and the inscrutable Power had become the themes of contemplation; and, in sublime forms of speech, worshippers had begun to describe the mystery of existence, and worship had begun to take on dignity.

Herbert Spencer finds in this sense of mystery the ground and essence of religion. Undoubtedly, it always has been and always will be a powerful stimulus to the religious imagination, and will continue to be, as it has been, the constant cause of awe and wonder. But the low, and not the high, forms of religion have been created by it. Persia, Greece, and Rome advanced to a higher and broader thought by giving place to a new experience which came next in order, as man thought about himself and the universe of which he was a part.

Summary. There has been made upon the sensitive nature of man the impression that around the known in human life is a greater unknown, in which are the sources of that which hurts or helps, and which it behooves man to comprehend; and there has grown up a great longing to have personal relations with the source of life.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear, curiosity and wonder.

The characteristic is wonder.

3. WISDOM. An early discovery was that in the mystery order was to be observed: that Power seemed to be controlled; that effect was linked to cause; that there was an orderly sequence of events to be learned and predicted; that whatever was clearly beyond human control seemed to come under the control of some other will or mind or power. Man thought he saw signs of thought, plan, purpose, intelligence, something akin to his intellectual life. The thought grew upon him that the mysterious Power

was alive and knew. He began to wonder if the human mind was not the offspring of an unseen Mind, and human wisdom the inspiration of an unseen Wisdom. He found it impossible to believe that in the amazing universe which he began to know man was the only intelligence, the only living being, the only thinker. Something had power; and no argument, however ingenious, has ever been so framed as to convince him that, if man should cease to be, all consciousness would vanish from the universe; that nothing would then be alive and aware of the wonderful processes which excited his admiration the more, the more he knew them. His anthropomorphic reasoning was: "I came out of the Power, I am like the Power. Therefore, the Power is like me, but vaster." Rude and imperfect reasoning it was. It has given the philosophers cause for merriment ever since. But the impression made has never been removed, and it has powerfully affected the common life of the race. Whether there be good reason for the belief or not, the impression is strong that there is a Wisdom which includes, if it do not inspire, our wisdom, and a Consciousness which includes, if it do not cause, our consciousness. The nature of the universe is such as to make this impression upon the unfolding mind of man. When he began to think thus of the mystery of the universe, man took on new relations with his Maker, whether regarded as He or It. When he began to believe that the Power which he could neither escape nor resist was itself under the control of wisdom, the superstitions which had grown up as partial forms of knowledge began to disappear. With the awe and wonder of the conception, a great reverence awoke. He began to worship the Wisdom, to regard it as infinite and eternal, and by that worship his own nature was dignified. Religion, in many forms, had already founded many institutions. The gods were already on their thrones, and for ages had ruled the world through

the hopes and fears, awe and wonder, of mankind. But now religion took on nobler forms. Fears were dispelled, hopes were dignified, and superstitions began to take their flight. Theism began to be, as a direct result of the apparent revelation of wisdom as a controlling power in the affairs of men. As knowledge has increased, theistic belief and worship have expanded; and great strength, steadiness, and courage have come into human life as the consequences of reliance upon infinite Wisdom.

Summary. The impression made upon the sensitive nature of man by the facts of experience has been that there is a Wisdom greater than human wisdom and a Consciousness other than human consciousness. By an impulse never accounted for, man began to worship the Wisdom; and the impulse has become hereditary and instinctive.

The principal emotions excited are fear, hope, wonder, curiosity, awe, and reverence.

The characteristic is reverence.

4. JUSTICE. About this time, whether before or after we cannot tell, another question was suggested to man by the facts of his experience. From other sources and through other experiences there had come to him a conception of justice. He had begun to talk about right and wrong in human relations, and to insist upon fair play among those who were bound to one another by their social necessities. The suspicion was early excited that the Power, the Mystery, the Wisdom, not only acted according to the laws of thought, but also took note of these human relations of right and wrong among men. It seemed to favor that which men called good, and to oppose that which men called evil. If one attempted to be unjust to his fellows, there was a suspicion that he might have to answer for his fault to other than human opponents. There

were many seeming exceptions to the rule ; but the wisest men agreed that it looked that way. Long before, men had been convinced that the Power had its favorites among men, serving some and destroying others. Now they began to wonder whether this was the reason for it ; whether it was always on the right side, because it was right. Bolder thoughts began to suggest themselves : The Wisdom itself, — was it just ? Did it so order its relations to the creatures who were in its power as to give them fair opportunity ? Were its gifts rewards, and were its injuries punishments, and were they fairly distributed ? Further than that went the questions of the ancient worshipper. Was the Wisdom itself true and righteous, itself the source of truth and righteousness ? Hitherto, fear had controlled man, who, because he dared not do otherwise, had prostrated himself before the supreme Power. Now there seemed to be notable hints that man might stand erect in the consciousness that he who was the Judge of all the earth would himself do right, and that, doing right, man need have no fear of him whom he called God. Inexpressible was the relief when religion began to take on this ethical form. Justice in human relations received overwhelming reinforcement, all human virtues received new sanctions, and all the relations of man to man were dignified by the belief that man entered into similar relations with the sublime object of his worship, the Being from whom he received his life and strength and such wisdom as he had.

Doubts still arose, and have never been wholly set at rest, because it is clear that in many ways the divine in its methods is unlike the human administration of justice. Many events seemed to contradict the assertion of absolute justice. Sometimes God seemed capricious and cruel. Sometimes he seemed to have favorites whom he loaded with undeserved favors ; while upon others, blameless of

wrong, he heaped calamity. But out of large experience and a wider generalization there came great flashes of conviction that, on the whole, in a large way, the Power does right, — that it is intelligent and it is just. The great ways of Providence carried conviction that bridged the doubt, and encouraged the worshipper to believe that this seeming wrong was only part of the mystery to be made clear when all was understood. The singular fact was noted, which greatly confirmed the faith of the worshipper, that they who most eagerly doubted the divine justice were not those who had suffered most. Out of the holiday experience of men came the loudest complaints. Out of the sorrows of men came the faith and hope, the great psalms of praise and the great prayers of trust.

The main course of human experience suggested the idea of the divine justice, and yet it did not force itself on the attention as do the fact and exertion of power. It waits for a higher intelligence in man. It comes out of a more complicated experience, and depends more upon the moral state of the observer. But, a certain stage of development being reached, it never fails to suggest itself; and, when once it enters the mind, religion receives new interpretation and takes on new functions. By a curious confusion of thought (so great is the force of this impression), they who think it wise to deny that the mysterious Power is wise or intelligent, still often assert an infinite principle of justice, a supreme and awful principle, to which all intelligent creatures must bow.

Summary. Upon the sensitive nature of man the impression has been often made, and in striking forms, that right is not a human law alone, but is part of the nature of things. The impression has become hereditary and instinctive, and powerfully impels men to worship the Being who is conceived as the source of all right and justice.

The emotions excited are fear, hope, wonder, curiosity, awe, reverence, obligation, and loyalty.

The characteristic is loyalty.

5. GOODNESS. All the joyous acts of life, all its bright, glad, noble experiences, suggest the conviction that the Power feels as we do, or at least desires *us* to feel as we do; that it is sympathetic, that it wishes well to man. The sense of loyalty to a Power which is as just as it is powerful, the reverence which awoke when the infinite Wisdom was revealed, easily shape themselves into loving admiration and affectionate regard. Man, in the full enjoyment of his strength, regarding the beautiful aspects of Nature and eagerly partaking of its bounty, seeing in the mystery of Nature a source of life, light, and joy, was easily excited to love and gratitude. The conviction that the Power is good was not to be resisted. To it the good man gladly yielded; and, doing so, a great joy, unknown before, came into his life. He had for ages been gathering strength and courage. New hopes had come to comfort him. Hints of greater things coming on for him out of the mystery of being had given dignity to his character. Loyalty to the right had given him great ambitions and inspirations. But, when upon his mind broke the fulness of the conviction that God was good, a new source of happiness and a new motive to action took possession of his sensitive nature and active powers. Loyalty to the Power which was just flamed up into love for the Power that was good.

Doubts afterward arose because the course of human experience is not uniform. Sorrow often came to cloud the sky of human life. But after sorrow, and often out of sorrow itself, there came great flashes of conviction that the Power wishes well to man. The wonder of it was that the deeper the experience of pain and sorrow,

the more assured the confidence that goodness and mercy are concerned in the administration of human affairs. Happy and prosperous men looked on when calamity befell others, and, noting the extremity of their pain, said to one another, "Surely, now he will curse God and die;" and when, instead of cursing and despair, some new song of confidence burst from the sufferer's lips, the wonder grew as to the mystery of the divine goodness. By evidence, men could never prove that the Power was wise or that it was good. But, by evidence also, men were never able to convince themselves that there was no God, or that he was not good, nor to change the main course of human thought away from the recognition of good-will in the administration of the central Power of the universe.

Summary. An impression has been made upon the sensitive nature of man that gratitude and love are due to the Power by which we live. The impression often made has been continually repeated in striking forms, and has become hereditary and instinctive.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear, wonder, curiosity, awe, reverence, obligation, loyalty, gratitude, and love.

The characteristic is love.

Religion, then, is a certain attitude of man in the presence of the supreme Power with which he has to do. It is the inevitable result of the impression made upon his sensitive nature by his attempt to establish relations with the universe in which he finds himself. The great facts make upon him the impression that power, mystery, wisdom, justice, and love are in immediate and constant contact with his life. The characteristic religious sentiments thereby excited are dependence, wonder, reverence, loyalty, and love. These combined are religion of a form

high or low, as one element or another predominates, and as they originate in base or noble natures, directed to base or noble ends. In their high and natural expression, they lift the whole nature to higher levels of trust, happiness, and courage. They prepare man for action. They give him a proper setting for the virtues. If religious men are not good (which is entirely possible and very common), because their development has been partial and one-sided in their human relations, still, if the religious impression be strong, if they have been greatly convinced that the power of which they are a part, be it divine or devilish (two words from the same root), is carrying out purposes in which they are necessarily implicated, that it has designs of which they are or may be the executors, they become exceedingly more influential than the irreligious in shaping the fortunes of society. The religious man is a force, and cannot be eliminated from the problem of modern development. For no sooner is one religion suppressed than nature produces another.

If religion take on a high form, its fruits are joy, peace, aspiration, a noble ambition, an elastic courage, a great expectation. If it take a low form, the emotions will still have their way, but in remorse and shame, in ignoble fears, in ignoble and selfish worship of the Power upon which even the evil-minded, if intelligent, must consciously depend for life and for such happiness as is possible to them. Herbert Spencer's latest book, while affirming agnosticism with great vigor, closes with these words concerning the man of science: "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." With that certainty ever before him, the coming man, be he scientific or otherwise, will sometimes be powerfully moved by the necessity of

ordering his life in accordance with the laws of that energy, and will in time develop anew, if he ever loses all existing forms of religion, something which will powerfully move his emotions and his imagination, and influence his conduct; and that will still be religion. Religion, as thus conceived, is the outcome of knowledge based on personal experience. Now, to this body of organized knowledge, what relation have the evidences, Christian, scientific, ethical, — what right relation?

1. CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES. Their nature and validity it is not necessary to discuss at length, because there is now little question among well-instructed people as to the independence of the religious sentiment, and the validity of the testimony offered by the religious consciousness of the race, before, outside of, and independent of Christianity. The evidences, in so far as they are valid, confirm the religious impression, — they do not supplant it. On this point there is little controversy; and it is only necessary to say that, whatever course our thought may take, we are brought at last to one example, — Jesus and his teaching. Of this, we note the fact that, in going up the scale of experiences, we find at the bottom every one in the hands of power, not every one at the top in conscious relations with goodness; and that, as men rise to successive heights of spiritual experience, they find that Jesus has been there before them. Whether men regard religion as a good or an evil thing in human society, there is substantial unanimity of opinion on this point. There is also increasing accord of belief in the statement that truth must furnish its own credentials. Truth and goodness unite in the words and life of Jesus, not made true and good by his word, but chosen and honored by him because they were self-evident and to him authoritative. Religion is not based on Christianity, but Christianity is based on religion.

2. SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCES. What is a scientific basis of religion? It has no scientific basis. It never had one, and it never can have. Facts have no scientific basis. Theories, hypotheses, intellectual systems, may or may not have a scientific basis. But religion is neither a theory, an hypothesis, nor an intellectual system. It is an experience. Science may furnish and multiply the occasions which excite religious emotion, — a service which it may often render to æsthetics or ethics. But religion, æsthetics, and ethics do not, therefore, become scientific, unless one should say that all truth, being agreeable to the principles of science, is therefore scientific. But, strictly speaking, science does not begin with experience nor with conscious knowledge, but with reflection, comparison, and classification. Truth is not a synonym of science.

Science is simply a co-ordination of facts according to their laws and relations. The facts have no scientific basis: the statement concerning the fact may. The attraction of gravitation and the motions of the heavenly bodies have no scientific basis. Kepler's laws have. Religion, being a fact of experience or nothing, can have no scientific basis; but theology, which is an attempt to co-ordinate and account for the facts of religious experience, may have one.

In the world of thought, just now a curious phenomenon is to be noted. There has been a vehement protest made against the ancient method of using the Christian evidences, on the ground that truth bore its own credentials, and could not be proved by evidence, however well attested. It must be a matter not of hearsay, but of experience. But now, in the name of science, many who most earnestly deprecated the old method, as tending to formalism and dogmatism, are engaged in the attempt to introduce scientific evidences, to be used in the same way as the basis of religious faith, with the prospect of bringing about results

similar to those which they so much deplore. If the present attempt should be successful, the next generation would certainly cry out against the new yoke; for, in the name of science, we are in danger of setting up a new creed, a new bigotry, a new intolerance. Does not that which they mean who talk about the "scientific basis" of religion relate to another question, namely, Can the facts of religious experience be classified, verified, assigned to their proper causes, and reduced to a system? That question has nothing to do with the reality of the experiences in question; and they who raise it ought to know that what they are invoking is that which they deplore as a bugbear of the past, namely, systematic theology.

Now, on any subject, one may have great knowledge and not be scientific. That is, he may have had wide experience of many things, which he cannot properly describe and classify. A Nantucket shipmaster in the old time might easily have had knowledge enough to furnish a dozen young scientists with all the facts they could manipulate. One may be very scientific and have little knowledge. He may have proper ideas of classification, but have as yet few facts to set in order. His classification waits to be filled out, and will greatly assist in his researches.

This distinction may easily explain a puzzle, which has given not a little trouble to those who have tried to give up all religion which was not scientific. They cannot understand why some, at least, of the greatest examples of religious insight of a kind not yet surpassed, nor soon likely to be, are to be found in rude ages, while as yet science was without form, and void. "If religion," they have anxiously asked, "is to be in the future dependent upon science, how does it happen that, with the spread of science, the moderns do not easily surpass the ancients in religious experience, or at least show the beginnings of a great advance in that direction?"

Isaiah and the prophets, how did they know? Whence the knowledge of that man who, in the Book of Job, exhibits such accurate acquaintance with the secrets of universal human experience? Why are not these great imaginations of the ancient time dispelled instead of being made more real to us by the advance of knowledge? Why should not some disciple of Herbert Spencer easily surpass the Twenty-Third Psalm, if increase of science is to give us increase of religion, — religion being on a scientific basis? Simply because experience always precedes science. First come the great discoveries, then the great systems. There were men, in times which favored such moods, who surrendered themselves to great impressions. They were not scientific: they did not need to be. They were capable of experiences which smaller men might formulate and classify. Such a man as Isaiah might in an hour have experiences which it would puzzle an ordinary man, during his lifetime, to describe and classify. Probably he would have been entirely unable to describe them himself. Religion, which precedes theology and is not to be confounded with it, has no scientific basis, and does not owe its origin or certainties to the scientific methods which may be employed in the investigation of it. New and higher forms of religious experience may follow such scientific researches, and are to be hoped for and expected. Whether theology has such a basis or not depends upon other considerations not here to be discussed.

3. **ETHICAL BASIS.** Has religion an ethical basis? No: it has no ethical basis, and in the nature of things can have none. Religion does not begin in ethics. It did not grow out of ethics. It was before ethics in origin, and has, during a great part of human history, wrought in life independently of, and, not infrequently, in distinct opposition to, the ethical sentiment. Let all sense of ethical

obligation be destroyed or reduced again to the level of the prehistoric standard, and still religion, although of a baleful sort, and threatening dire evils to mankind, would none the less be a power in human life not to be disregarded. To say that neither ethics nor religion can possibly attain to its best without the other is not to offer proof that they are in any sense identical, or can be based the one upon the other. *Æsthetic* feeling cannot attain to its best when divorced from morals. But they are not therefore identical. Ruskin says that an artist who is a bad man will die young or paint bad pictures when he is old. But that is not to say that art is based on morals.

The desire to identify ethics and religion is always the sign of a magnanimous intent. It means that one is so enamoured with goodness that nothing which is not good can be accepted and honored by him. During a great part of its history, the Church, in all its forms as an organized institution, has disparaged ethics, and done less than due honor to those who were more just than devout. They who see the defect of the Church reverse the process, and, in their generous ardor for fair play and due honor to every part of human nature, put ethics in the place of honor before occupied by religion. So doing, they repeat in reversed order the enormous mistake of the Church, and prepare the way for another revolution in the interest of the exact truth, and equal honors to all parts of the spiritual nature of man.

That a bad man cannot have a good religion, and that religion cannot come to its best when divorced from ethics, are statements so true and commonplace that they need no proof. But this is the plain English of the ethical basis. The heart sends its currents through both veins and arteries, and each depends upon the other. But veins and arteries are not therefore identical in origin, function, location, or structure. Remove one or the other, and the heart

will shed its blood with equal impartiality ; and the ebbing life will show that both are essential parts of the organs of life.

Dogmatism has in the past been associated with religion ; and, when the attempt is made to rehabilitate ethics, the danger is that one may confound religion with dogma, and so with magnanimous intent make a costly blunder. Dogma results from the attempt to make a final definition. But the definition is not the fact, and may be quite inadequate to represent it. Ethical experience is one thing, the description of it quite another ; and dogmatism is quite as likely, — just now, for example, in the strife between transcendental and utilitarian ethics, rather more likely, — to attach itself to ethics as to religion. When we put religion on an ethical basis, the contention is not between ethics and dogma. Intend what we may, what we do is to set religion and ethics over against each other in an unnatural antagonism. Out of such a strife, evil and not good must come, and evil of the same kind which they wrought who insisted that ethics must be subsidiary to religion and subservient to it. Neither is subject to the other. Neither is the basis of the other. Both are elements of glorious beauty in that growing human nature which is large enough to hold them both in its ample bosom.

4. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. The phrase is badly damaged, and yet is indispensable, because it has to do with a fact in the life of every man. Good or bad, every one must take some, if not all, of the five steps already described. (1) Even the bad man comes to a sense of dependence upon Power, which he cannot escape nor resist. That consciousness will go with him, the source of his noblest hopes and most degrading fears. He cannot do other than wonder at times whether the Power is working

with him or against him. When he believes that it is on his side, he rejoices, even in his evil, if that be in his heart. But, as he goes on into closer relations with the Power, upon which he makes his demands and from which he expects reinforcement, he becomes aware (2) of mystery. There is something more than he thought in the relation. If he be thoughtful, the great occasions of his own life will excite in him a certain awe and wonder, — his marriage, the birth of his children, their growth, their death, and the great joys and sorrows which these experiences bring. These will excite in him wonder as to the meaning of it all. (3) If he have the usual experiences of his kind, the suggestion of wisdom, or at least of intelligence in some way correspondent to his own, but greater, will break upon him. Then, if he be taking an upward course, and have the desire to give the best within himself a chance, there will come upon him a great longing to know what the Wisdom means by what it does, what it wishes and intends. Consciously or not, he prays: "Oh that I knew what the Wisdom asks of me, that I might do it! Oh that I might be guided, that I might know its ways!" Then (4), coming to the thought of the justice, the law, the eternal purity, and contrasting with them what he finds within himself, the soul within him shrinks for shame. As the revelation of the eternal Perfectness comes to him, he sees his folly, his weakness, and his sin; and he cries, "Woe is me; for I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the Lord of glory." Then his heart melts within him in contrition and tenderness; and another vision breaks upon him, and he hears (5) the proclamation which came to the seer in the wilderness: "The Lord is a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth;" and then, in the presence of the eternal goodness he is comforted.

It is possible for a man not ethically sound and good to

pass through all these experiences, but in a reversed order, resembling the other like a shadow cast in troubled water. The conviction comes upon him only to cause him terror, fearful wonder, shame, guilt, and remorse. It is his experience of religion, nevertheless.

Of all these things there is and can be no proof. They are the impressions made upon many successive generations of individuals, impressions which may be repeated indefinitely, and which yet cannot have scientific verification. For no experience can be like another. We look upon a person and love him, we cannot tell why. Our testimony would be accepted in no court of law, because we have nothing to offer but the memory of an impression; and yet, for such an impression, men have often risked their lives. No knowledge that we have is so sure except mathematical.

5. SCIENCE AND ETHICS. What, then, can they do? Everything which two of the most important parts of human nature can do for another part to keep it in time and tune with all the rest. Science opens the eyes, stimulates the imagination, reveals the mighty universe of fact with which the soul has to deal as it passes beyond the bounds of its own experience in its quest for knowledge of the eternal. Science removes difficulties and multiplies opportunities. It sets before the mind the immensities of time and space, the wondrous things out of the eternal law, the marvel and mystery of all being, even that which is simply the stuff which being uses. And, so doing, it gives the imagination of man the room which it requires for its flight, and vastly increases the number of the objects which make upon the sensitive nature impressions of sublimity and power.

Ethics: Who shall dare to disparage or slight that mystic power in man which, growing through all the ages

from the rudest beginnings, commands continually the growing life of man, and shapes it to finest issues? Springing, as it does, out of the necessary relations of man to man, it reveals itself as the only condition on which society can exist, the only way in which an individual can attain to his best. It clears the mind of ignoble ambitions. It purifies the heart, and so prepares the nature for freedom and joy and peace. The glad upspringing of the soul into the activity of being becomes its natural motion. Religion becomes a nobler thing, when it is the relation of a good man to the powers above. It is no longer the mere dependence of weakness upon Power, of ignorance seeking the infinite Wisdom. It becomes a revelation of moral issues, which demand of every creature that he shall be no longer a spectator of, but a participant in, the great processes by and through which the Power is working out the destiny of man, and of what besides one can only dimly see, while he believes it to be sublime beyond his power of conception.

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